

## Theme II: Experiencing the Profession/ Unit 2: Structure and Governance

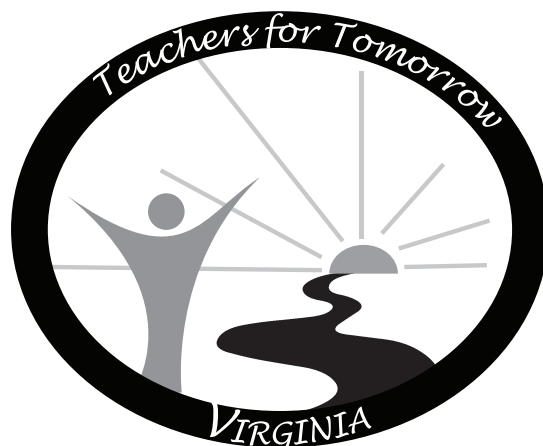
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### Culminating Activity for This Unit:

Who Has the Voice?.....	1
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*Bold titles indicate Virginia Supplement. Non-bold titles indicate contents of CERRA S.C. Teacher Cadet Curriculum.*





### Theme II: Experiencing the Profession/Unit 2: Structure and Governance

#### Preface

This unit includes a new culminating activity, inserts for the Teacher Cadet **Governance of Schools** lesson, and a supplemental lesson titled **Contacting Your State Legislator**.

The new culminating activity, **Who Has the Voice?**, engages students in a less time-consuming activity than the original **Making the Case—School Issues on Trial** and provides students an opportunity to learn how to express their views in a mock school board meeting with local stakeholders regarding educational issues.

Three inserts for the Teacher Cadet **Governance of Schools** lesson are intended to replace information related to South Carolina with materials that are pertinent to the Commonwealth of Virginia. Use the information on Virginia Supplement p. 16a to replace Answer Key item #18 on p. 16 of the Teacher Cadet curriculum. Likewise, the fifth paragraph on p. 17 (“Governance of Schools”) of the Teacher Cadet curriculum should be replaced with the information on Virginia Supplement p. 16b. The **Virginia State and Local Educational Governance Ladder** and **Virginia State and Local Governance** will replace the corresponding information related to South Carolina on p. 18 of the Teacher Cadet curriculum.

The Virginia supplemental lesson titled **Contacting Your State Legislator** provides students an opportunity to learn how to contact their Virginia legislators and track state legislation about education. The lesson provides an appropriate segue to the new culminating activity. It can be taught following the Teacher Cadet lesson **Governance of Schools**. However, it is suggested that teachers carefully plan the timing of this lesson in order to coincide with the legislative process. More detailed guidance is provided in the lesson instructions.

Estimated instructional time: two weeks

#### Directions for Placement in Teacher Cadet Binder:

Culminating Activity: Who Has the Voice?

Replaces pp. 1 – 4

Answer Key #18

Insert after p. 16

Governance of Schools paragraph 5

Virginia State and Local Educational Governance Ladder  
Contacting Your State Legislator

Insert after p. 18



## Theme II: Experiencing the Profession/ Unit 2: Structure and Governance

### Culminating Activity: Who Has the Voice?

**Objectives:** Students will identify issues of concern and develop talking points for conveying those concerns to educational stakeholders and decision makers.

**Essential Question:** How can students, teachers, and citizens have a voice in decisions affecting their educational community?

**Culminating Assessment:** Students will prepare a three-minute presentation to a decision-maker about an issue of concern.

#### Activities:

1. Towards the beginning of this unit, you may wish to conduct a field trip to attend a local school board meeting or, if these meetings are televised, assign students to watch at least one session. Ask students to pay particular attention to citizen participation in the meeting. For homework, students will take notes regarding one issue of interest to them and bring a short summary about the debate (and outcomes, if relevant) around this issue to class.
2. Introduce the topic of educational policy, referring back to the past Teacher Cadet activities and discussions regarding who makes decisions in education. Tell students that they will be discussing decisions that affect them and provide an example regarding classroom or school policies, senior privilege policies, rules regarding the structure or use of school facilities, or other areas in which students may have a voice within the school or school division.
3. Guide the class in brainstorming issues and policies that affect them, their class, the school, students' families, or the school system.
  - a. Guide students to reflect upon how issues that are shared by students and teachers, parents, administrators, or the general public might have a broader support base than those that affect students alone.
  - b. Post the issues so the entire class can view them during the discussion (e.g., type comments into computer with a large monitor or have students write out their ideas on large chart paper).
  - c. Throughout the discussion, encourage students to identify who has a stake in the issues mentioned. For example, "Does the issue affect students? All students? All the teachers? The entire school community? Education in general?"
4. Go over the directions for the worksheet "Who Has the Voice?" Students should work individually on the worksheet. After the worksheet is completed, ask each student to choose one issue to share in a small group. Each student will summarize



## Draft Virginia Teachers for Tomorrow Curricular Supplement

the selected issue from the ideas generated on the worksheet. The group, through consensus, will choose one issue to which they would all be willing to commit time and energy.

5. Discuss the following with the class:
    - a. The purpose of this activity is to develop “talking points” appropriate for the audience students are addressing about an issue that is meaningful to them. When presenting a concern to a decision maker (e.g., an administrator or the school board), speakers need to know exactly what they will say and plan to say it in a three- to five-minute time period (most school boards allow three minutes for public comment). They should seek to capture the audience’s attention by using a “hook,” and they should prepare to be a confident advocate for their cause.
    - b. Student groups choose their top concern. Allow groups about 25 minutes to prepare a three- to five-minute presentation.
    - c. Students can communicate a memorable message by establishing the following:
      - **The Hook**—a beginning that immediately captures the attention and interest of the audience.
      - **The Face**—a description of one or more people who are or will be affected by the issue and how they will be affected.
      - **The Connect**—how the issue connects to the interests of the audience.
      - **The Research/Statistics**—one or two key, unforgettable statistics or researched outcomes connected to the issue.
      - **The Flex**—options the audience may take in responding to the issue.
      - **The Crunch**—a clear request for commitment to action by the audience (which can include a timeframe).
- Adapted from “Do You Know the ‘10 in 60’ Community Rap?” *Common Ground* XI (4) (July–August): p. 1.
- d. Ask students to choose a decision maker (e.g., administrator, teacher, school board member) with whom they would like to discuss a particular issue. Each student will practice a two- to three- minute presentation of talking points to a small group, including a brief introduction [introduce themselves, tell why they are meeting with the decision maker(s), thank the representative for consideration, etc.] and a brief closure (quick summary, request for commitment, and thank you). For each presentation, assign one person as timekeeper and another to listen for the six components of the community rap.



**Assessment:**

Students will write and present to the class a scripted dialogue consisting of a short memorable message that includes the six components of the community rap (the “hook,” the “face,” the “connect,” the “research,” the “flex,” and the “crunch”). The presentation will be evaluated with the “Community Rap” assessment rubric.

**Materials:**

- Student Worksheet: Who Has the Voice?
- Assessment Rubric: Community Rap

**Time:** 90 minutes

**Standards:**

II.2.3: Students will describe the governance structure of their local, state, and national educational systems.

IV.1.1: Students will use appropriate verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques to foster positive interactions in the classroom and with educational stakeholders.



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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

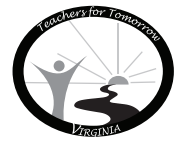
### Who Has the Voice?

Based on the discussions in class, identify three issues that are important to you. Select issues you believe you might be able to influence alone or with other students.

Consider your potential role as an advocate for each of the issues you identify:

- How does the issue affect you, your friends and family, school, and community?
- What do you know about this issue?
- Who can you contact to share your views about this issue?
- What are you willing to do to help your views become a reality?

Identify at least three issues:	How am I and others affected by this issue?	What do I know about this issue?	Whom will I contact about this issue?	What am I willing to do to help my views become a reality?
1.				
2.				
3.				



## Assessment Rubric: Community Rap

Criteria	Little/No Competence	Developing	Competent	Highly Competent
Organization	Audience cannot understand presentation because there is no clear sequence of information.	Audience has difficulty following presentation because student jumps around.	Presents information in logical sequence that audience can follow.	Presents information in clear, logical sequence that is easy for audience to follow.
Content: Hook and Face	Fails to present a "hook" or a "face" to capture the interest and attention of the audience.	Attempts to capture the interest of the audience by beginning with a "hook," but no clear "face" is evident.	Presenters capture the interest of the audience by beginning with a "hook," using illustrations of individuals affected by the issue.	Presenters successfully capture the attention of the audience with a "hook" that is clearly related to the issue, using compelling illustrations of individuals affected by the issue.
Content: Connect and Statistics	No connection made between the issue and the interests of the audience; no convincing evidence or statistics to support argument.	Attempts to connect the issue with the interests of the audience but evidence or statistics fail to convincingly support argument.	Connects the issue with the interests of the audience and provides evidence or statistics that support argument.	Clearly connects the issue with the interests of the audience and provides convincing evidence or statistics that support argument.
Content: Options and Action	No options presented for responding to the issue and no clear request for action.	Weak options presented for responding to the issue; unclear what actions are being recommended.	Options presented for responding to the issue along with a set of actions that could be taken.	Provides practical options for responding to the issue along with a clear set of actions that could be taken.
Speaking Skills	Student reads the majority of report with no eye contact. Rate is too slow or too fast. Presenter speaks too softly, mumbles, or uses monotone. Little or no expression. Fails to finish within time limit.	Student occasionally uses eye contact, but still relies upon reading some of the report. Articulation and expression convey lack of confidence or enthusiasm. Completes presentation within time limit, but seems rushed.	Student maintains eye contact most of the time. Articulation, pace, and expressiveness are acceptable. Demonstrates moderate level of enthusiasm, confidence. Completes presentation within time limit.	Student maintains eye contact. Well-articulated, well-paced, and expressive. Demonstrates enthusiasm, confidence. Completes presentation within time limit.

Grade\_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

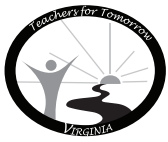






**Who Decides: Answer Key (Page Insert)**

18. What standardized tests will be given? Working in conjunction with the Department of Education, the Virginia State Board of Education establishes the standardized tests, as well as when and to whom they should be administered. The Virginia Standards of Learning were developed from an objective adopted by the state Board of Education in June 1981. Statutory authority clarified the objective in 1986. The Standards of Learning were designed to "identify what students are expected to accomplish, to provide a method of determining what has been learned and to encourage teachers to place emphasis on critical areas in the curriculum." Local school boards are required to implement educational objectives that meet or exceed the standards. The state provides the funding for the development of the assessments to determine the students' mastery of the objectives. The Office of Assessment and Reporting in the Department of Education implements the assessment requirements established by the Board and General Assembly. The state must meet certain federal requirements regarding assessing and reporting student achievement through the No Child Left Behind legislation.



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### Governance of Schools (Page Insert)

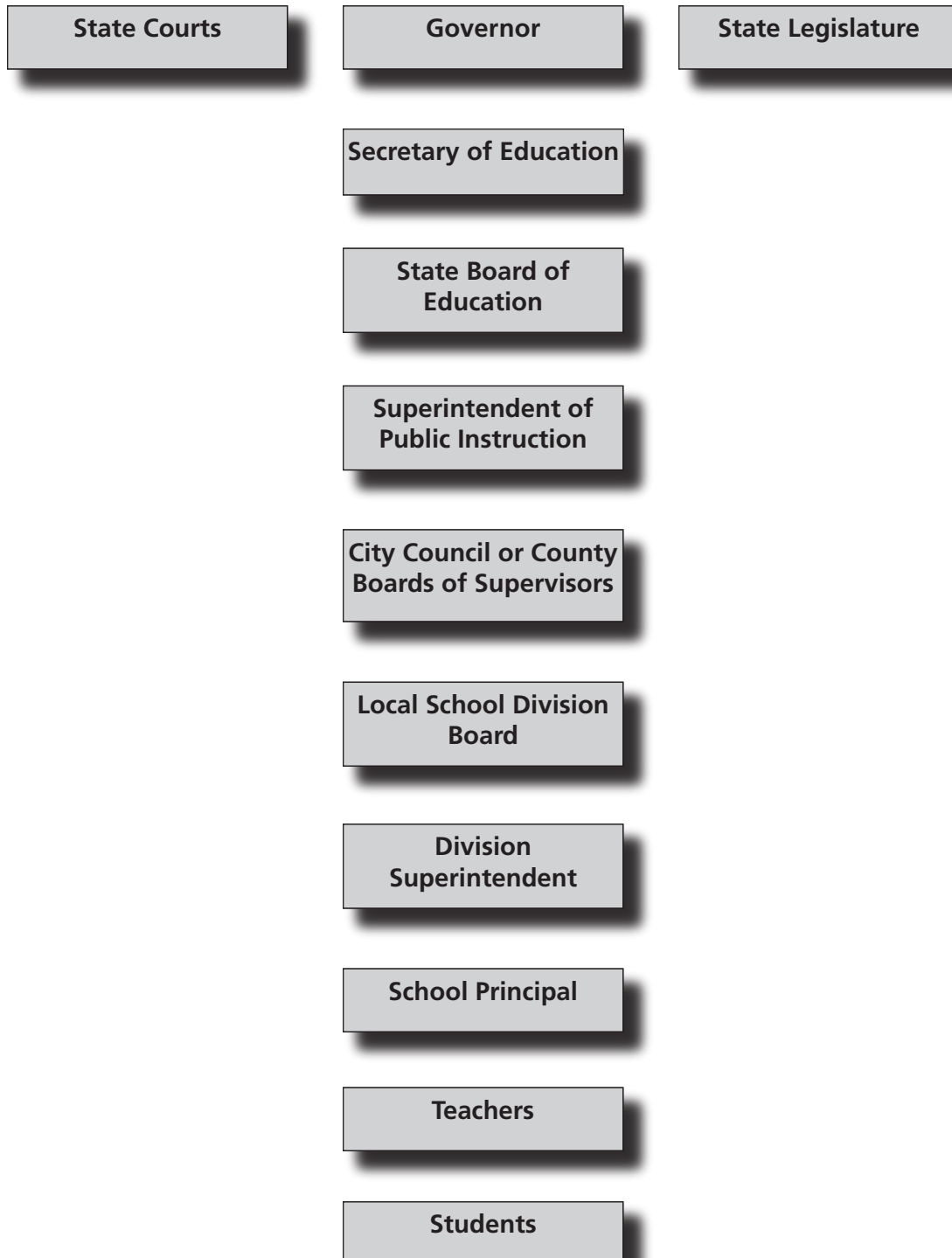
Replace the fifth paragraph of the Teacher Cadet curriculum p. 17 with the following Virginia information:

At the state level in Virginia, several school governance policies have been adopted with the purpose of improving the quality of education in Virginia. Two particularly notable examples include the adoption of the Standards of Learning and the establishment of statewide expectations for student achievement incorporated into the Standards of Quality for schools.



## Virginia State and Local Educational Governance Ladder

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### Governance of Schools in Virginia

Each of the three branches of government—legislative, executive, and judicial—have an influence on education governance in Virginia, but the **General Assembly** and the **governor** have the greatest authority in regard to the overall structure and operation of public schools.

The **General Assembly** shares with counties and cities the cost of school operations. Mainly through the state income and sales taxes, the legislature funds about half the costs of implementing the Standards of Quality, a set of minimum standards for class size and other basics. Often, the General Assembly makes additional money available for special projects such as placing computers in schools. Counties and cities pay for all the educational services not financed by the state. They do so primarily through local property taxes and grants received from the federal government. Budgets have an enormous effect on school staffing and school programs. Therefore, the legislative committees that set the budget, the House Appropriations Committee and the Senate Finance Committee, have a very powerful influence on public schooling. The General Assembly also has the power to govern school operations through specific laws such as the law requiring daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. Such laws generally are passed only with the endorsement of the House Education Committee and the Senate Education and Health Committee.

Day-to-day school governance is most visible in the officials and governing boards overseen by the executive branch of government. The **governor** appoints both the **secretary of education** and the **state superintendent of public instruction**. Both officials serve at the governor's pleasure. The secretary of education has control of the budget and policies suggested by the Department of Education. The **State Board of Education** is also appointed by the governor (with the approval of the legislature). The superintendent of public instruction acts as secretary to the board, implements its policies, and performs duties it assigns.

**Local school divisions** have jurisdictional boundaries that are concurrent with county or city boundaries. (Towns do not have a direct relationship with school divisions.) Local school boards make policies and approve regulations within the authority accorded them by the State Code. Some boards are elected and some are appointed by Boards of Supervisors or City Councils. Boards of Education have no independent revenue authority. Their budgets come from taxes collected by the local political jurisdiction and allocated through the local City Council or Board of Supervisors budget process.

The **division superintendent** is the chief executive officer of the local school division. This official is appointed by the local School Board for a term of not more than five years. Once appointed, the division superintendent is a state officer who can be removed by the board only for cause (failure to perform legal duties or for a removable offense specified in law). The division superintendent is responsible for carrying out the policies enacted by the division and state boards.

**Principals** and **teachers** are hired by the division school board and are placed under the supervision of the division superintendent. Superintendents, principals, and teachers



can be employed only if they meet the licensure requirements set by the State Board of Education. The division superintendent delegates to principals the supervision of teachers and students. The principal is also directly named in the State Code for a myriad of responsibilities, including the successful implementation of the Standards of Learning. Principals and teachers can have their contracts terminated only by action of the division school board, but the division superintendent may reassign them to any location or position at any time.

**Students** attend school under the compulsory attendance law that requires their attendance (unless home schooled or entered in a private school) until age 17. While at school or in a school activity, students are governed by the policies of the division school board and supervised by principals and teachers. The principal and teachers act “in loco parentis,” Latin for “in the place of a parent,” a term that refers to the legal authority of a school employee to take on some of the functions and responsibilities of a parent. American courts primarily apply the doctrine as a broad provision allowing schools to act in the best interests of the students as they see fit. This power permits school officials to act in ways that might otherwise be considered violations of the students’ civil liberties. For violations of school board policy or for refusal of the reasonable directions of a school employee acting in loco parentis, a principal or assistant principal may suspend a student from attending school. Only the division school board may expel a student from the school system.

Virginia **state courts** have the power to review and overturn the decisions of school officials. Schools must operate within the authority given them under law. A person who believes that an action such as an expulsion or contract termination is unfounded can take the case to court for further review.

School governance is subject to many other overlapping authorities, responsibilities, and exceptions. As a consequence, changes in public school policy often involve extensive study, much public discussion, and decision making at all levels of government. This process is readily accessible to all citizens, and that is why public schools truly are a reflection of the people they serve.

The Education Commission of the States keeps an updated web page that can serve as an additional resource for links to the governor and the superintendent of instruction, legislative education committee chairs, state policies and reports, state education statutes and the state administrative code, and related bodies:

<http://www.ecs.org/html/statesTerritories/stateinfo.asp?state=VA>



## Theme II: Experiencing the Profession/ Unit 2: Structure and Governance

### Contacting Your State Legislator

**Objective:** Students will be able to contact legislators and track state legislation about education.

**Essential Question:** What can I do to influence educational policy in the Commonwealth of Virginia?

**Assessment:** Students will write a letter to their state legislator with personal opinions about a particular bill or bills.

#### Activities:

##### *Before the General Assembly Session*

1. Orient the students to the information and resources that are available regarding legislative activity on the General Assembly's website at <http://legis.state.va.us>.
  - a. Demonstrate the site or have students go to the site (click on "Citizen's Guide," "Citizen Participation," "Contacting My Legislator," "Who's My Legislator," and related links).
  - b. For bill tracking, students should go to the General Assembly's website and click on "Legislative Information System." At this site, they can track bills by number, topic, and year of introduction. They can also get bill summaries.
  - c. By clicking on "Standing Committees" at this site, students can get a list of bills referred to the Education Committee.
2. In addition to following legislative action through the General Assembly's website, students could also become aware that a number of organizations

#### Timing This Lesson:

This lesson will work best if its timing is planned to coincide with the legislative process. Bills and bill numbers are made available to the public on the opening day of the General Assembly session, which starts on the second Wednesday in January and lasts for eight weeks in even numbered years and just six weeks in odd numbered years, with an option to extend annual sessions for a maximum of 30 days. Updated information is available on the General Assembly website: <http://legis.state.va.us>.

Checking on bills at the very start of the session is essential because action in committee sometimes occurs too quickly for full public involvement. Bills that do not pass in one year often are reintroduced the following year. Therefore, it is useful to review the bills sent to the Education Committee in the previous year to prepare for issues that likely will surface in the next session. From time to time, the General Assembly assigns legislators to study an issue before the next session begins. Such studies usually result in legislative initiatives, and it is helpful to know about them before the session opens.



are actively involved in legislative issues regarding education. Several organizations have registered lobbyists who represent them on education issues. Their legislative agendas and positions on bills they have introduced are often posted on their websites. Some of the major groups include:

- a. the Virginia School Boards Association, <http://www.vsba.org>
- b. the Virginia Association of School Superintendents, <http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/go/vass>
- c. the Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals, <http://www.vassp.org>
- d. the Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals, <http://www.vaesp.org>
- e. the Virginia Education Association, <http://www.veaweteach.org>
- f. Virginia Professional Educators, <http://www.virginiaeducators.org>
- g. the Virginia PTA, <http://www.vapta.org>
- h. the Organization of Virginia Homeschoolers, <http://www.vahomeschoolers.org>
- i. the Home Educators Association of Virginia, <http://www.heav.org>

## *During the General Assembly Session*

1. Identify legislation in which you are interested.
2. Follow the legislation through action of subcommittee and committee:  
Check the General Assembly's website for daily updates or track bills at:  
<http://legis.state.va.us>
3. Find out your legislators' committee and subcommittee assignments. Legislation of interest to the education community is usually assigned to the House Education Committee or to the Senate Education and Health Committee.
4. Contact your legislator when legislation reaches his or her subcommittee, committee, or the floor. The General Assembly Constituent Viewpoint Hotline is 1-800-889-0229 (in Richmond: 648-1990).

## **Assessment:**

Students will write a letter to their state legislator that includes the following:

- a detailed description of the bill under discussion
- a clearly stated opinion about the bill supported by personal knowledge and experience
- accurate spelling and grammar

## **Materials:**

- Handout: Writing to Your Legislator
- A computer with internet access for each student
- Grading Guide: Letter to Legislator

**Time:** 3 months (follow the bill through a legislative session)



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### **Standards:**

II.1.2: Students will understand the educational trends that have influenced the issues in today's education.

IV: 1.1: Students will use appropriate verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques to foster positive interactions in the classroom and with educational stakeholders.





## Writing to Your Legislator

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### Assignment:

Your elected representatives appreciate hearing your opinions on the bills under consideration during the legislative session. Your task is to write a concise one-page letter to your state legislator sharing an opinion about a current educational bill on which the legislature is working. Use the following guidelines as you compose the letter:

1. Be courteous. Identify yourself as a future educator and as a constituent. Give your full address.
2. Identify bills by number if possible. Otherwise, clearly describe the issue or measure.
3. Be informed about the issue and then write your own views/opinions from personal knowledge or experience. (Form letters do not get the attention of legislators.)
4. Focus on only one issue. Be brief, but offer a thorough explanation of your opinion.
5. Check spelling and grammar! Letters from educators are expected to be error-free.

Model address:                      The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_ (use full name)  
    General Assembly Building  
    Richmond, VA 23219

Letter salutation:                      Dear Senator/Delegate Smith:

To e-mail state delegates:      del\_delegate's last name@house.state.va.us  
 Example:                              del\_Brink@house.state.va.us

To e-mail state senators:        district#@sov.state.va.us  
 Example:                              district28@sov.state.va.us



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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Grading Guide Letter to Your Legislator

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Score on a scale of 1 – 4, with 1 = does not meet standard, 2 = attempts standard, 3 = meets standard, and 4 = exceeds standard.

Criteria	Score
1. Includes bill number and a detailed description of the bill under discussion.	
2. Expresses clear opinion about the bill supported by personal knowledge and experience.	
3. Spelling and grammar are correct.	
4. Follows proper format and tone for business letter, including return address, date, recipient address, salutation, body, closing, and signature. Or, for e-mail, includes proper form of address (e.g., Honorable), follows a formal style of writing, and closes with full name and return address.	
Total Score	

Grade\_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

INSERT TAB

II-3